

What is claimed is :

1. A method for processing information, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving information from a plurality of bar code scanners;

b) determining source and destination information for the received information; and

c) distributing data from the received information to at least one destination identified by the destination information.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving data from the at least one destination for communicating to a user of a bar code scanner identified by the source information.

3. The method according to claim 2, wherein information is received in batch form from the identified bar code scanner and further comprising communicating responsive information to the identified bar code scanner.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the information is received in an encrypted form and is decrypted before the step of distributing.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the source information comprises device identification information.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the destination information comprises information from a scanned bar code.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising maintaining a database of assigned bar codes.

8. The method according to claim 7, further comprising assigning unique bar codes comprising destination information which is stored in the database.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the unique bar codes are assigned for a given time period and are reassignable thereafter.

10. The method according to claim 8, further comprising distributing a bar code image file for the unique bar code when the bar code is assigned.

11. The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating security information with each bar code scanner and requiring the security information from a

user before use of the scanner or before accepting bar code information from the scanner.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of distributing comprises maintaining a database of bar codes and destination information corresponding thereto and determining the destination information from the received information and database entries relating thereto.

13. The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving time information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

14. The method according to claim 1, further comprising receiving location information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

15. The method according to claim 1, wherein the source information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

16. The method according to claim 1, wherein the destination information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

17. The method according to claim 1, wherein device identification information is received and the source

information is encoded in the device identification information.

18. The method according to claim 1, wherein the information is received by wireless communication.

19. The method according to claim 1, wherein the data is distributed to the destination over the Internet.

20. A portal for processing information, comprising:

a. a first interface for receiving information from a plurality of bar code scanners;

b. a processor for determining source and destination information for the received information; and

c. a second interface for distributing data associated with the received information to at least one destination identified by the destination information.

21. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the second interface receives data from the at least one destination for communicating to a bar code scanner identified by the source information.

22. The portal according to claim 21, wherein information is received in batch form from the identified bar code scanner and wherein the first interface

communicates responsive information to the user of the identified bar code scanner.

23. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor receives the information in an encrypted form and decrypts the information before distributing same.

24. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the source information comprises device identification information.

25. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the destination information comprises information from a scanned bar code.

26. The portal according to claim 20, further comprising a database of assigned bar codes.

27. The portal according to claim 26, further comprising the processor assigning unique bar codes comprising destination information which is stored in the database.

28. The portal according to claim 27, wherein the unique bar codes are assigned for a given time period and are reassignable thereafter.

29. The portal according to claim 27, further comprising the processor distributing a bar code image file for the unique bar code when the bar code is assigned.

30. The portal according to claim 20, further comprising the processor associating security information with each bar code scanner and requiring the security information from a user before use of the scanner.

31. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the processor maintains a database of bar codes and destination information corresponding thereto and determines the destination information from the received information and database entries relating thereto.

32. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives time information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

33. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives location information from a plurality of bar code scanners.

34. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the source information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

35. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the destination information is encoded in a bar code to be read by a bar code scanner.

36. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives device identification information and the source information is encoded in the device identification information.

37. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the first interface receives information by wireless communication.

38. The portal according to claim 20, wherein the second interface distributes data to the destination over the Internet.

39. A method for managing the distribution of information between a plurality of users and a plurality of content providers, said system comprising a plurality bar code readers, an information exchange portal and a plurality of content providers having a content information source for distribution to select one of said plurality of users, wherein said method comprises the following steps:

distributing a bar code reading device to each of the plurality of users; said bar code reading devices being enabled to communicate bar coded data selected by the user to a predetermined information exchange portal;

distributing bar codes to at least one customer for distribution, said distributed bar codes being stored on a database which is accessible to the information exchange portal and said database includes a corresponding information component associated with each such bar code;

receiving at the information exchange portal a bar code distributive to at least one consumer over a network connection, and associating the consumer which delivered the bar code source with the corresponding information component; and

recording the association on a information management database.

40. A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned

entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising the steps of:

providing a first type of media with said bar code;

connecting a user to the Internet portal when the bar code on the media is read with a bar code reader; and

transmitting information of a different media type related to the first media type from the portal to the user.

41. The method according to claim 40, wherein the first media type is a static graphic and the different media type is video.

42. The method according to claim 40, wherein the first media type is a print and the different media type is audio.

43. The method according to claim 40, wherein the first media type is a print and the different media type is graphics.

44. The method according to claim 40, wherein the first media type is a one language and the different media type is a second language.

45. The method according to claim 40, wherein the bar code reader is integrated into a wireless device connectable to the Internet.

46. The method according to claim 46, wherein the wireless device is a cell phone.

47. The method according to claim 40, wherein the bar code has graphical pattern associated therewith to visually identify same as one corresponding to an externally assigned entity at the portal.

48. The method according to claim 47, wherein the externally assigned entity is an Internet address.

49. The method according to claim 40, wherein the first type of media is a movie advertisement and the different media type is a movie trailer.

50. The method according to claim 40, wherein the first media type is an advertisement for a book

and the different media type is an excerpt from the book.

51. A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising the steps of:

providing a textual material with said bar code in at least one section thereof;

connecting a user to the Internet portal when the bar code is read in said at least one section of the textual material; and

transmitting information to the user relating to said at least one section of the textual material.

52. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is the chess column of a newspaper and wherein the information transmitted is a chess program.

53. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is a chess column of a newspaper and the information transmitted is in the form of interactive play.

54. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is a bridge column of a newspaper and the information transmitted is in the form of interactive play.

55. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is a sports section of a newspaper and the information transmitted relates to specific athletes.

56. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is a sports section of a newspaper and the information transmitted comprises a video clip associated with a picture or text.

57. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is the comics of a newspaper and wherein the information transmitted is a continuation of the printed cartoon.

58. The method according to claim 50, wherein the information transmitted is a punch line of a joke.

59. The method according to claim 50, wherein the information transmitted is the answer to a trivia question.

60. The method according to claim 50, wherein the one section is a classifieds section of a newspaper and the information transmitted comprises media associated with the item for sale.

61. The method according to claim 50, wherein the information transmitted relates to newspaper delivery.

62. The method according to claim 50, wherein the information relates to the purchase of a lottery ticket and wherein the cost of the ticket is deducted from an account of the user.

63. The method according to claim 50, wherein the bar code is associated with an advertisement for a magazine and wherein the information transmitted is a sample of the magazine.

64. The method according to claim 50, wherein the bar code is associated with an article and wherein the transmitted information is an audio reproduction of the article.

65. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a textbook and wherein the bar

codes are associated with questions at the end of chapters thereof and wherein the information transmitted is answers to the questions.

66. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is questions and the bar codes are associated with the questions and wherein the transmitted information is a real time status of a user's score.

67. The method according to claim 50, wherein the bar code is associated with a contest and wherein the transmitted information is a question that must be answered within a given time period.

68. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is associated with a product and wherein the transmitted information is an instruction manual for the product.

69. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is associated with a product and wherein the transmitted information is an warranty information for the product.

70. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material are commands for a VCR and the transmitted information is the programmed settings of a VCR.

71. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a receipt and wherein the transmitted information is the current balance of a checkbook.

72. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a menu, wherein the bar codes are associated with entries in the menu and wherein the information transmitted is a confirmation of an order.

73. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a menu, wherein the bar codes are associated with entries in the menu and wherein the information transmitted is a description of a dish.

73. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a menu, wherein the bar codes are associated with entries in the menu and the number

of the table and wherein the information transmitted is a confirmation of an order for that table.

75. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a menu, wherein the bar codes are associated with entries in the menu and wherein the information transmitted is a confirmation of an order for delivery.

76. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a discount card and a restaurant bill menu, wherein the bar codes are associated with bill and the card the information transmitted is a discounted price.

77. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a business card and the bar code is associated with the address on the card and wherein the transmitted information is directions to the address.

78. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a business card and the bar code is associated with the address on the card and

wherein the transmitted information is types of transportation to the address.

79. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a business card and the bar code is associated with the address on the card and wherein the transmitted information is hotel accommodations at the address.

80. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a business card and the bar code is associated with the address on the card and wherein the transmitted information is restaurants at the address.

81. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is voting materials and wherein the transmitted information is information about a candidate.

82. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a map and wherein the information transmitted is a dynamic variation of the map depending upon at least one of the time of day and day of the week.

83. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a map and wherein the information transmitted is a dynamic variation of the map depending upon real time road conditions.

84. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a commuter timetable and wherein the information transmitted is a dynamic variation of the timetable depending upon real time train information.

85. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a parking sign and the information transmitted is the parking regulations including at least one of rates and allowed times.

86. The method according to claim 85, wherein the parking cost is charged to an account of the user.

87. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a menu and wherein a bar code is associated with a seat in a venue and wherein the information transmitted is a confirmation of a food order from the menu for that seat.

88. The method according to claim 50, wherein the bar code is associated with a label on a product to be sold and wherein the information transmitted is information about the product.

89. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is an airline ticket and wherein the transmitted information is real time information about the flight.

90. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is an airline ticket and wherein the transmitted information is real time information about the seating assignment.

91. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a waiting list receipt and the information transmitted is the real time position on the waiting list.

92. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a credit card and the transmitted information is notification of the use of the card to the owner of the card.

93. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a list of applets and wherein the transmitted information is an applet from a registry thereof.

94. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is an advertisement for a product and the transmitted information is a confirmation of the delivery of a trial version of the product and further comprising a second bar code associated with the trial version and delivering a complete version in response to the reading of the second bar code.

95. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a receipt and the transmitted information is information about the last purchase.

96. The method according to claim 50, wherein the textual material is a business card and wherein the transmitted information is a calendar.

97. A gaming method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising the steps of:

providing a gaming tickets with said bar code;  
connecting a user to the Internet portal when the  
bar code on the gaming ticket is read with a bar code  
reader; and

transmitting the results of the game from the  
portal to the user.

98. The method according to claim 97, further  
comprising providing interaction between the user and  
a gaming website prior to transmitting the results.

99. A method for using bar codes encoded with  
information corresponding to an externally assigned  
entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising  
the steps of:

providing said bar code;  
connecting a user to the Internet portal when the  
bar code is read with a bar code reader and linking  
personal information therewith; and  
transmitting information from the portal based  
upon the personal information.

100. The method according to claim 99, wherein the personal information is device specific personal information.

101. The method according to claim 99, wherein the personal information is user specific personal information.

102. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a police or fire emergency sticker for use in a home, and wherein the personal information is the homeowner's address and telephone number.

103. The method according to claim 102, wherein the personal information includes the nearness of a hydrant.

104. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a sticker in a vehicle and wherein the personal information is the name and address of the vehicle owner.

105. The method according to claim 104, wherein the personal information includes the location of the vehicle.

106. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a restaurant coupon and wherein the personal information is a profile of the customer.

107. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a cellular telephone and wherein the personal information is credit card information for completing a transaction.

108. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a customer's clothing and wherein the personal information is the customer's preferences.

109. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a package for package returns and wherein the personal information is the pickup address for the user.

110. The method according to claim 109, further comprising interaction between the user and the portal to select the time for pickup.

111. The method according to claim 110, further comprising real time authorization from the portal for the return.

112. The method according to claim 99, wherein the bar code is on a credit card and the personal information is a profile of the user to effect pre-approval.

113. The method according to claim 99, wherein the personal information is a profile.

114. The method according to claim 113, wherein the profile is selected by the user.

115. The method according to claim 114, wherein the profile is selected as a function of the bar code that is read.

116. A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity, comprising the steps of:

providing said bar code with a prefix portion indicating whether the bar code is encrypted or not;

connecting a user to a telephone number or an Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader in dependence on whether the bar code is encrypted; and

transmitting information from the portal to the user based when connected to the portal.

117. A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising the steps of:

providing said bar codes on separate items;

connecting a user to the Internet portal when the bar code on the separate items is read with a bar code reader; and

transmitting information from the portal to the user matching the two separate items.

118. A method for catalog ordering , comprising the steps of:

providing a primary bar codes for each item in the catalog, wherein the primary bar codes are encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity when received at an Internet portal;

providing a set of secondary bar codes related to at least one of size, color and style for use with all relevant items in the catalog;

connecting a user to the Internet portal when a primary bar code for an item is read with a bar code reader;

prompting the user to read at least one secondary bar code; and

transmitting information from the portal to the user related to the availability of the item.

119. The method according to claim 118, wherein the secondary bar codes are on the back page of the catalog.

120. The method according to claim 118, wherein the secondary bar codes are on a foldout page of the catalog.

121. The method according to claim 118, wherein the prompting is by text from the portal.

122. The method according to claim 118, wherein the prompting is by text and an audio signal from the portal.

123. The method according to claim 118, wherein the prompting is by visual prompts.

124. The method according to claim 118, wherein the secondary codes are generic codes which have different meanings for different contexts depending upon the prompt.

125. The method according to claim 118, wherein the availability information includes whether the item is in stock.

126. The method according to claim 118, wherein the availability information includes whether the item is on back order.

127. The method according to claim 118, further comprising linking personal information with the data in the bar code.

128. The method according to claim 127, wherein the personal information includes whether the user is entitled to a discount.

129. The method according to claim 127, wherein the personal information includes whether the user is entitled to a free offer.

130. The method according to claim 127, wherein the personal information includes size information of the user.

131. A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity when received at an Internet portal, comprising the steps of:

providing said bar code to a group of users;  
connecting each user to the Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader ; and permitting the group to collaborate at a web page.

132. A method for using bar codes encoded with information corresponding to an externally assigned entity, comprising the steps of:

providing said bar code with a prefix portion indicating whether the bar code is encrypted or not;  
connecting a user to a telephone number or an Internet portal when the bar code is read with a bar code reader in dependence on whether the bar code is encrypted; and

transmitting information from the portal to the user based when connected to the portal.